

Testimony of

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Aspiring Educator

Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

Eliminating edTPA would be beneficial for both myself and my students. Completing edTPA takes my time and attention away from time spent on lesson plans and creating connections with my students. Adding edTPA to the workload of student teaching decreases the time for students overall to complete requirements as a teacher and as a student. The massive requirements of this assessment takes away time from attending meetings with other staff members and teachers, parents, and one-on-one time with students. Potential teachers leave the classroom and rush home to gain as much time with this assessment as possible. This workload is added to the already mounting work of lesson planning for weeks. For a veteran teacher, this amount of work may be easier to handle, but for students still learning the ways of becoming a teacher, the overload of work overwhelms them mentally. Many college students looking forward to becoming teachers are discouraged when they learn the requirements of edTPA and leave the program. This further adds to the teacher shortage we are currently facing. The many layers of this assessment also add to the stress of time constraints for aspiring educators. Students are required to film themselves teaching and upload the video on top of writing at least 8-10 pages per task, a total of 40-50 pages of writing. These videos must be clear and not break the time limit set by the company. You are not allowed to edit the videos. With students creating distractions or not understanding the importance of this video, teacher candidates have the added stress of hoping their students create the environment needed to submit a satisfactory video. Many teacher candidates are forced to re-record themselves many times teaching a lesson, hoping they can be heard, and the quality is up to

par. Uploading the video can cause unnecessary stress as well. Video files are difficult to compress and upload to portfolios like the ones required of us. The worry of the video file being too large, or the file deleting causes mental anguish for students.

In many teacher preparation programs, teacher candidates are taught to pass edTPA like elementary students are taught to the test. There are overviews of the assessment, and students practice writing a task for an assignment, but this can only help aspiring educators so much. We are taught many times to add specific vocabulary in and hope that this bumps our score. When receiving the score after completion, there is no feedback given. This adds to the student's stress as they now do not know what they did wrong. This can be mentally draining if the student fails a portion. They have no idea where they went wrong or how they can improve themselves to get a passing score.

Workload factors and stress over this large assessment are only half the problem with finding and retaining teacher candidates. edTPA is a \$300 cost for students out of pocket. This \$300 is after paying tuition for 4-5 years, and on top of fees to pay for 4 Praxis exams at \$60 per test, and a \$164 Foundations of Reading exam. These fees are not often discussed when people decide to go to school to be a teacher. This is a huge factor that deters great people from completing their schooling. Financial stress is the reason a majority of people do not go on to complete higher education for any degree. Teaching, which is an already underpaid profession, puts its best candidates into debt before they are even certified. The costs of these exams and assignments deter some of the best people for this profession and will continue to do so. Again, only adds to the teacher shortage at hand.

Please consider supporting future educators, and educators all over by replacing edTPA with a method that genuinely determines the ability of aspiring educators to be beneficial teachers to our youth.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

